

TOPIC: Statewide Housing Needs Assessment Efforts

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SUMMARY: The needs assessment subcommittee of the Blue Ribbon Panel met on July 12 to develop an action plan for a statewide system of housing needs assessment. The subcommittee determined that needs assessments should be conducted on a rotating basis throughout the state. That is, needs assessments should be encouraged and funded in communities as their present needs assessments become obsolete. Communities with no needs assessments or very old needs assessments (older than 5-10 years) should begin the needs assessment process as soon as possible. Needs assessments should be collected by the Division of Housing and made publicly available through the web site. A staggered list of communities that have needs assessments in need of update should be developed and used to ensure that there are no regions without relatively current needs assessment data.

The subcommittee also concluded that no separate statewide needs assessment should be conducted. The statewide need should be determined through a compilation of all local needs assessment data. The State Housing Board should also consider making regional needs assessments a requirement for communities seeking housing funds from the Board.

BACKGROUND: Early on in the Blue Ribbon Panel process, the panel directed staff to look into finding better ways of collecting and using data on housing throughout the state. Presently, housing needs assessment conducted at the county, municipal, and regional levels are an excellent source of housing data. The needs assessment process is also very helpful in that it brings together a number of local stakeholders and engages them in determining a community's goals for housing and housing balance. The supply and demand of housing is a key component as is the role of housing in the local economy. Needs assessments are generally conducted by a small number of research agencies paid by local funds, and also by the Division of Housing which often provides 50% or more of needs assessment funds for communities.

Nevertheless, the use of needs assessments in the past has been haphazard and has not been done in a systematic fashion that includes all regions of the state. Nor are needs assessments necessarily conducted in such a manner as to facilitate comparisons across regions. Many communities have only old, obsolete needs assessment available, or have no needs assessment available at all. The panel created a subcommittee to develop a plan for implementing some kind of statewide needs assessment effort that would ensure that all regions of the state have relatively new and complete needs assessments.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Using the subcommittee plan below, the Blue Ribbon Panel should recommend a statewide needs assessment plan as the core of a larger informational services effort to be provided by the Colorado Division of Housing. Coupled with the ColoradoHousingSearch.com, an online library of needs assessment data could serve as an excellent foundation for an online database of local and regional housing data. The Blue Ribbon Panel should look for ways to further expand upon the needs assessment data in creating a comprehensive view of housing need and its role on local economies.

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August 2, 2005

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Colorado Blue Ribbon Panel on Housing – Needs Assessment Subcommittee

July 12, 2005

Economic and Planning Systems, Inc.

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Rachel Basye - CHFA

Dan Guimond – President, EPS

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Goal 1 – Provide information for policymakers at state and local levels make informed decisions

A. Guidelines for Assessments

1. always include baseline data – incomes/wages, demographics (see attachment)
2. use data from consolidated plans
3. update existing needs assessments
4. use market studies and tax credit data
5. consider geography and wide regional issues
6. employ housing needs forecasts

B. Focus should be on analysis of data, not on policy change or on dictating housing goals.

C. Statewide needs assessment - construct regional needs assessments so that they can be compiled into one statewide needs assessment. No new research should be done for a statewide needs assessment.

Goal 2 – Method - standardized system for conducting and aggregating studies

A. Data should be reported to Division of Housing

B. Use existing data from work done by other agencies

1. local regional studies
2. transportation agencies
3. state departments
4. homeless organizations and other non-profits – reference –point-in-time study for homelessness.

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- 5. school districts
- 6. HUD studies and related research
- 7. workforce data
- C. Other data
 - 1. survey data from local employers
 - 2. commuting patterns
 - 3. data to define the boundaries of a “region.”

Goal 3 – Scope

- A. Include full continuum of housing demand and supply – from homelessness to homeownership.

Goal 4 – Timing

- A. Existing needs assessments – all existing assessments should be collected and assembled by February of 2006.
- B. Remaining gaps in needs assessment coverage areas should be identified and necessary assessments to “fill in the holes” should be commissioned – begin conducting new needs assessments no later than November 2006.
- C. Ensure that within 4 years, the whole state has been covered by some kind of needs assessment, so that a new cycle of updated needs assessments may begin.
- D. Start with as much existing data as possible. Given the dependence on existing needs assessments at this time, standardized formats will need to be phased in over time.

Goal 5 - Implementation

- A. There are 3 types of communities that conduct a needs assessment or are in need of conducting a needs assessment.
 - 1. Self-selecting communities looking to conduct or update assessment
 - 2. Communities where a needs assessment is of low-priority or is not planned at all.
 - 3. Communities looking to avoid a needs assessment.
- B. Adopt policies to encourage ongoing updating of assessments in all regions.
- C. State housing Board may wish to consider creating a policy requiring that regional needs assessments be completed in all regions applying for funding.
- D. Secure permission to post all needs assessments on Div web site and increase availability to the public. – Ensure that all assessments are public information and are non-proprietary.

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Attach: List of recent needs assessments

List of baseline information categories for needs assessments

Suggested common categories for needs assessments:

I. Housing Overview

- A. Housing Costs and Income
- B. Affordability and Cost Burden

II. Demographic Conditions

- A. Population Growth
- B. Household Characteristics

III. Economic Conditions

- A. Employment by Industry
- B. Employment Forecasts
- C. Wages and Income
- D. Projected Housing Needs
- E. The Boundaries of the Regional Economy

IV. Existing Housing Services

- A. Non-Profit Providers
- B. Public Sector Programs
- C. Private Sector Development

V. Housing Supply

- A. Housing Inventory
- B. Housing Costs
- C. Future Development

VI. Housing Affordability

- A. Household Income
- B. Gap Analysis
- C. AMI Considerations

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Recent Housing Needs Assessments – includes date and research firm information when available.

Boulder County Consortium of Cities 2005 - McCormick

City of Arvada 2004 McCormick

City of Aurora 2004 EPS

Pueblo 2004

Las Animas County 2004

Huerfano County 2004

City of Loveland 2004 Housing Collaborative

City of Durango/La Plata County 2003 BBC

City of Westminster 2003 McCormick, Rees, RRC

Routt County 2003

Garfield County 2003

Clear Creek County 2003

Broomfield County 2003

Jefferson County 2003 McCormick, Rees, RRC

City of Englewood 2002 Development Research Partners

Adams County 2002 McCormick

Elbert County 2002

Lincoln County 2002 EPS

Grand Valley (Mesa County and region) 2002 EPS

City of LaFayette 2001 Housing Collaborative

Hinsdale 2001

Ouray 2001

Montrose 2001

Delta 2001

Gunnison County 1999

City of Fort Collins 1999

Eagle County 1999 Rees

City of Boulder 1999

South Metro Corridor 1999

Douglas County 1999

Longmont 1999 Rees